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METHODISM IN THE MAKING

AN INSIDE SURVEY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

BY

WILBUR F. SHERIDAN

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Methodism in the Making

An Inside Survey of the Epworth League

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BY
WILBUR F. SHERIDAN

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FOREWORD

This booklet aims to set forth the significance of the Epworth League movement.

There are some who never have known just what the League stands for. Others once knew but time has dimmed the image, like the figure on a worn coin.

Organizations themselves sometimes get to copying copies, and lose the original meaning and impulse.

New young people's units have sprung up since the League was born, and the relation of these to it needs defining.

Then for those familiar with all the preceding there remained to be performed the service of gathering the latest data, and their condensation into tabloid form.

These constitute the "why" of this booklet.

WILBUR F. SHERIDAN.

March, 1916.

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CHAPTER I

FOUR STAGES IN THE RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH

There are four stages in the religious development of youth.

First, that of instruction in the Word of God.

This is absolutely fundamental. All ages of the church have recognized this. And in no age has the catechetical or pedagogical method reached the perfection it has attained in our own. This is largely due to the increased efficiency of organization in the Sunday School.

Second, there is the age of conversion.

The late Professor William James said in his "Varieties of Religious Experience" that "one of the peculiarities of man is his susceptibility to sudden conversion."

Even where the moment of transition from non-faith into saving faith is not clearly marked yet there is a time in the

life of every Christian youth when he comes to recognize himself as a child of God, and acts upon that belief. That is the second stage in his religious life.

The third stage in the religious development of youth, is that of self-expression, or the open confession of Christ. Of course service is a mode of self-expression but I am referring to verbal devotional self-expression.

It was Phillips Brooks who said that the biggest thing one human can do for his fellows is to get a vision of God and tell the story of it to his friends.

Dr. J. H. Jowett said, in his president's address before the Congregational Council of Great Britain some years ago: "The Church is poor because so much of her treasure is imprisoned. Our riches are buried in the isolated lives of individual members instead of being pooled for the enrichment of the fraternity. We have exalted the ministry of one man, and out of the limited pool of his experiences—and sometimes they are not even experiences

but only fond and desirable assumptions—the whole community has to drink, while the rest of the pools remain untapped. And O the treasures that are hidden in those unshared and unrevealed experiences!"

Dr. Jowett then made a plea for the utterance of Christian experience, all in all the strongest plea I have ever read in behalf of Christian testimony.

This confession of Christ in Christian testimony is a fundamentally important stage in the religious development of youth. Without it the filial consciousness cannot be maintained in any life, young or old. While thousands date the first clear witness of the Spirit to their acceptance as children of God, at the moment when they first openly confessed Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

The fourth stage is that of personal initiative in service.

During the Spanish-American War a French official who accompanied the American army, wrote home to the French press

that the distinguishing characteristic of the American soldier was his power of individual initiative; that while the European soldier must be told what to do in an emergency, the American private soldier seemed to know it by intuition.

In the battle of Missionary Ridge in our Civil War, it will be remembered, General Gordon Granger gave the order for his division to take the enemy's first line of intrenchments. The troops swept up the mountain slope and captured it. Then to Granger's surprise they drove on to the second line of intrenchments and on up past the third, and swept the enemy from the crest of the hill. Granger came dashing up after them and flashed along the front shouting "I'll have you court-martialed, every man of you; for I ordered you to take the first line and you've taken the whole hill!" Yet he was delirious with joy.

No Christian training is complete that does not develop this power of personal initiative. As long as the Christian remains

a passive recipient of the teaching of another, or acts only as directed by another, he is in spiritual childhood. If he is a man in years it means a case of arrested development.

It is the glory of Protestantism in general, and of Methodism in particular, that its scheme of religious training tends to develop to a high degree this power of personal initiative. Of this, I will speak more fully later on.

These then, are the four primary stages in the religious development of youth: (1) Instruction in the Word of God. (2) Conversion or the definite acceptance of Christ. (3) Self-expression or witnessing. (4) Personal initiative in Christian service.

The first of these stages, that of instruction in the Bible, is taken under the auspices of the Sunday School. The Sunday School was never before so finely organized, so complex, so well equipped in every way as it is to-day. And it never before had so strong a hold on the popular heart. It is the great Half-Way-House to the church.

It is the church's greatest evangelistic field and opportunity.

It is a matter of rejoicing, also, that the second of these stages or steps, is often taken under the auspices of the Sunday School; viz., that of conversion. While many pastors witness the conversion of Sunday School pupils at the altar during revival meetings, or during union evangelistic campaigns, very many Sunday School pupils are led to Christ on Decision Day or other special days in the Sunday School itself. All these, whether in revival meetings or on Decision Day in the Sunday School, are uniformly credited in conference reports as taking place under the auspices of the Sunday School.

We may, therefore, speaking broadly, say that the first two stages in the development of youth are taken under the auspices of the Sunday School.

The second two stages are taken under the auspices of the Epworth League; viz., the stage of personal initiative in service, and the stage of self-expression.

The League sets before its young people a thousand open doors of service, and by its Institutes and Courses of Study prepares them for that service. And the League also furnishes the opportunity in its devotional meetings for that self-expression—that open witnessing for Christ which constitutes, as we have seen, so essential a part of spiritual development.

All these four stages are important—fundamentally important. We can do without none of them. Therefore the Sunday School and the League are both necessary to any normal and adequate development of Christian character. Our Epworthians should support whole-heartedly the Sunday School's extensive propaganda. And the Sunday School with equal enthusiasm will support the Epworth League's intensive program.

In the next two chapters we will look more closely into these stages of self-expression and personal initiative.

CHAPTER II

THE LEAGUE'S EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

If the highly efficient Secretary of the Board of Education were to report to the approaching General Conference that every Sunday evening forty-eight thousand young people—all there are in our Methodist colleges and secondary schools in America—gathered together for prayer and the study of God's Word, and applying that Word to their personal lives, the General Conference would burst into applause. And the heart of the whole church would be stirred. Of many of these students he could say it.

It would matter little though the interpretation of Scripture were faulty and the speech of many stumbling. The thrill would come from the sight of an army of youth, the future leaders of the church on their knees, instead of being assembled on those same Sunday evenings around

card tables or playing rag time music in the parlor, or engaged in social pleasures.

But is the heart of the church thrilled to know that, not forty-eight thousand, but ten times forty-eight thousand of her young people are gathered every Sunday evening to pray, to read the Word of God and apply it to their own needs, and the need of the world?

Does it thrill the heart of the church to know that in those unpretentious and often depreciated League meetings eyes glisten and cheeks flush and lips tremble with glowing passion for Christ, and great resolves crystallize into life purposes? Leagues vary in spirituality, and individual Epworthians differ from one another as much as do their elders, but in thousands of Leagues, scenes like this are witnessed. As a pastor I saw it again and again; and as a General Secretary I have witnessed such scenes all over the land.

If it is true that Christianity is perfected by fellowship, and if it is further true that such fellowship opportunities are furnished

to the youth of the church by the Epworth League and by it alone, what must we conclude as to its value?

Jenny Lind quit the stage at the height of her power and popularity. No one knew why.

One evening a friend found her sitting by the sea, gazing at a beautiful sunset and, anon, reading a Bible open in her lap.

It was an opportune time and the friend asked her: "Why did you quit the stage?"

"Because," said she, "I found myself caring less and less for that," pointing to the sunset, "and nothing at all for this," laying her hand on the Bible.

A subtle atmosphere of worldliness that was deadening the taste for all higher things was her peril. It is the peril of youth to-day. To counteract it we must have not only the dignified and noble, though somewhat formal services of public worship, and the beautiful social atmosphere and catechetical methods of the Sunday School, we need them—but we must have also, the warmer, more spiritual at-

mosphere of the fellowship service: what years ago was furnished by the class and "band" meetings: what in some churches is still furnished by the prayer meeting, but for which as far as the youth of the church is concerned, we must look to the Epworth League.

Of course the degree to which the Epworth League furnishes this vital spiritual atmosphere depends, in part, on the devotional tone and spiritual efficiency of the congregation of which it is a part. Yet the character of that devotional service is such as to raise the level of earnestness and activity of the young people above that of the older groups who take part in no similar discipline.

If the Epworth League offered nothing else than just that Sunday evening quiet hour of devotion and fellowship and self-expression, that alone would justify its existence, over and over. Indeed, were we to abolish the League to-day, we should have to organize it all over again to-morrow, even though under some other name.

CHAPTER III

THE LEAGUE AS A DEVELOPER OF INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE

Up to a certain point in college the program calls for a pouring-in process by text-books and teachers. But there comes a time when the student is asked to undertake original work—to go out on lines of individual research and investigation. Unless the student does so, his mental life is dwarfed.

It is exactly so in his religious development.

Up to a certain point the young Christian simply receives from his teachers: in the Sunday School and pulpit and home. But unless his spiritual life is to be stunted he must go out on lines of original effort—of personal initiative in service.

The Epworth League offers extraordinary opportunities for individual initiative. Not only the democratic character of its devotional meetings, but the fact that the League assigns every member to some department of work, and there in turn, to

one or more sub-committees, all of which together fill the whole horizon with beckoning hands of opportunity.

A few months ago as I was about to step on the platform on a Sunday afternoon, at Central Church, Detroit, the telephone rang and I answered. It was Ed. M's voice at the other end: "I am sorry not to get down to hear you, Brother Sheridan, but a lot of us Epworthians are so tied up with the mission work you set us at that we cannot get away. It has been growing and branching out in so many ways that some of us just have to stay with it."

It was a piece of mission enterprise that I had suggested to my Tabernacle Church Epworth League when I was pastor there seventeen years before. They had been at it ever since and it had become a great work, and in the meantime these young people had been developed by it into a splendid company of workers.

There are literally hundreds of instances of groups of Epworthians and individual

Leaguers being led on to places of influence and power through the development received in League labors.

It is not too much to say that the Epworth League, through its Institutes, its Study Classes in Missions, Social Service, Christian Stewardship, and Bible Study, its regular departments of work, subdivided into almost numberless committees, and by the general messages of its conventions and devotional meetings, sets a thousand open doors of service before the youth of the church. What is more, it trains and inspires them to enter those open doors.

Another phase of the League's development of personal initiative arises from its democracy. With the exception of the Women's Societies it is the only democracy in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The local Church is governed by a Quarterly Conference or Official Board. Aside from the trustees the members of that body are appointed by the pastor subject to confirmation by the Board itself. This Board exercises control over all the activities and

interests of the local Church. Not only its business matters but its methods of public worship, its general methods of propaganda, the raising of its benevolences, its service of music, the calling and dismissing of its ministers. Theoretically, the bishop appoints the minister, and theoretically the minister directs the arrangements of public worship. In practice the Official Board controls both, at least as far as the larger Churches are concerned.

The fact that this Board is constituted by a small group of men—the pastor and the Quarterly Conference—makes the government of the local Church an oligarchy rather than a democracy.

The same is true of the government of the Sunday School. It is governed by the Sunday School Board. It consists of the officers, elected by the Sunday School Board; the teachers, nominated by the Sunday School superintendent with the approval of the pastor; and the Sunday School committee, appointed by the Quarterly Conference.

Here again the government is in the hands of a small group—an oligarchy rather than a democracy. "Oligarchy" is an awkward word. I do not use it in reproach. If I knew a more accurate word I would employ it.

Perhaps this government of the local Church and Sunday School by the suffrage of a limited number is the best possible method. It has been proved both practical and efficient. I do not criticise it. I simply call attention to the fact that the Epworth League mode of government differs from it in that all the League's members may vote in the selection of officers; also that all the affairs of the League are voted upon by the chapter as a whole, except the routine pieces of service delegated to the several officers of the Cabinet as a whole.

This democratic mode of government may not secure the highest possible efficiency in the accomplishment of some specific tasks. The pastor or committees of older people could perform some of the service more effectively. But the older peo-

ple's doing it would not develop the young folks. When the young people plan it and perform it, it develops in them personal initiative in service, and it tends to tie them up to the great world-program of the Church. And does not that far outweigh the imperfection of the specific pieces of work performed?

Here are some of the specific lines of service being undertaken by Epworthians:

Social survey of community, marking danger spots, etc.

Securing names for local option election.

Carrying voters to polls in autos, etc.

Securing evidence against violators of liquor and gambling laws.

Finding work for jobless people.

Conducting creches or nurseries at church time.

Packing and sending boxes to poor children and mission schools.

Supporting native pastors in mission lands.

Supporting workers in various home mission fields.

Conducting "fresh air" camp for poor children.

Paying the way of aged people in summer fresh air homes.

Taking troops of boys on hikes.

Conducting summer camps for boys.

Arranging athletic contests for boys and girls.

Carrying out programs of recreation for young people, winter and summer.

Visiting the sick and "shut-ins."

Visiting from house to house in interests of church and Sunday School.

Calling on strange young folks and inviting them to revival meetings.

Holding socials for non-Christian young folks.

Holding services at hospitals, and distributing flowers and reading matter to patients.

Holding receptions for students home from college.

Decorating church for all sorts of special occasions.

Furnishing flowers for the pulpit.

Conducting kindergartens.

Conducting Bible Study, Mission Study, Social Service Study, Christian Stewardship Study, Christian Citizenship Study, and Personal Evangelism Study Classes.

Organizing Win-My-Chum campaigns.

Organizing Gospel Teams and conducting evangelistic campaigns in neighboring towns.

Doing clerical work for pastor.

Advertising revival campaigns and regular church services.

Welcoming strangers.

Ushering.

Singing in choir or acting as substitute choir when regular singers are absent.

Getting up lecture courses.

Raising money for pastors' salaries.

Raising money for church debts.

Raising money for new churches.

Giving tenth of income to church.

Training League young men to become Sunday School superintendents and secretaries and treasurers.

Training League young men and women to become Sunday School teachers.

Training League young men to become stewards and trustees.

Training League young women to become deaconesses.

Training League young men to become leaders in temperance and other reforms.

Training League young men to become preachers.

Training League young men and women to become foreign missionaries.

Training League young men to become Y. M. C. A. secretaries.

Training League young women to become Y. W. C. A. secretaries.

Signing up League members to go to college.

Collecting the church benevolence subscriptions for the pastor.

Helping the men of the church make the Every-Member Canvass.

Conducting the public service on summer Sunday nights when the church officials are away on vacation.

Conducting Watch-Night services.

And on and on—yet we have only begun to suggest the lines of Christian service that Epworthians are actually doing and the impulse to which they have largely received in the training of the League.

As a concrete illustration here is the report to a recent quarterly conference of one League's work—First Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., Rev. D. H. Guild, pastor.

"The total membership is two hundred, all active except five. Eighty-three of these were added during the quarter. The average attendance at devotional meetings was 104. Seven literary and social meetings were held, and other meetings at the county farm, the rescue mission; one at the home of a sick boy; one meeting of tithers; two at the tabernacle; four spe-

cial prayer meetings, and five 'Win-My-Chum' week services. The total amount of money raised was $327.02; expended, $329.50.

"The League has three Mission Study classes and one Bible Study. There are forty fellow workers; thirty-three comrades of the Morning Watch; and forty-five Christian Stewards. There were eleven conversions during the quarter. Thirty-three *Epworth Heralds* were taken.

"The Social Service department distributed twenty-four baskets of provisions, 103 garments, sixty-five bouquets and plants, two Bibles, spent $37.20 for the needy poor, gave $4.00 to the A. C. W. temperance fund, and made 897 calls.

"Two special temperance meetings were held; posters were put up.

"Missionary work done included the three study classes; 1,100 gospels sent to wounded soldiers; fifty Bibles in Hungarian and Roumanian to Rolling Mill District Mission; lecture on 'Orient' by S. M. Foster; Ernsberger pledge, $75.

"No devotional meetings were held during January and part of February on account of the union evangelistic meetings held at tabernacle, but our Leaguers were working hard for the success of the meetings, and many were brought to Christ through the personal work of our fellow workers.

"The week of March 21-28 was observed as 'Elsie Roush Self-Denial Week' by this Epworth League. Elsie Roush, one of our own Leaguers, answered God's call to Loanda, Africa, four years ago and is doing a great work in the girls' school at that place. Our League has set aside one week each spring to be observed as self-denial week, the proceeds of which are sent as a 'love gift' to Miss Roush to aid her in her work among those little black girls of Africa.

"This year the week opened with a special Epworth League devotional meeting in which an original sketch was given describing Miss Roush's work in the school. At this meeting the Elsie Roush Self-De-

nial envelopes were given out and the members were asked to deny themselves pleasures, expensive clothing, excess food, etc., in memory of the supreme sacrifice of Jesus. The week was a week of blessing, and when the gifts were brought together a money offering of $50 (covering two scholarships) was sent to Miss Roush, and a box containing one hundred yards of ginghams and percales for dresses (cut out and partially made), muslins for undergarments, towels, wash cloths, sheets, pillow cases, twenty dozen pairs stockings, thread, darning cotton, buttons, combs, tape, one case table silver, one thousand quinine tablets, two pounds sterile cotton, bandages, adhesive tape, toys, etc. The box also contained several personal gifts for Miss Roush, including a beautiful copy of Hofmann's 'Christ in Gethsemane' for which Miss Roush had expressed a desire. The value of the contents of the box amounted to approximately $100, making the total results of our self-denial week $150."

CHAPTER IV

THE LEAGUE AS AN EVANGELISTIC FORCE

Many of the most beautiful scenes in the history of evangelism have been those of young people's efforts for young people. Every soul-winning pastor looks back with joy on such occurrences.

In many churches the Epworth League has been what pastors have called it over and over in talking to me "My right arm of power in soul-winning."

As personal workers, as visitors from house to house, as aids in singing and conversing with seekers and the like. But it is of two things in addition to all this that I shall speak now.

First, the League's organized, systematic evangelism, the "Win-My-Chum" campaign. Second, the evangelizing power of the League's regular devotional service at its best.

In June, 1913, when out in Montana at the State League Convention, the state president, Ray C. Smith, asked me what I thought of the plan he and his fellow offi-

cers had in mind, to have a week of prayer in November throughout the Montana Leagues as a preparation for the winter's work; I replied, that such a week of prayer would no doubt be very helpful.

As I thought it over, it occurred to me that it might be made not only a week of prayer, but a week of soul-winning. And not for Montana only, but for the nation. And that night the general plan of the "Win-My-Chum" campaign, including its name, unfolded itself in my mind.

This included:

1. The formation of a Constituency Roll.

2. The preliminary ten days' visitation of the Constituency Roll by League workers.

3. The reception to non-members on the Friday night before "Win-My-Chum" week.

4. The "Week" itself, with its addresses and testimony services, devoted to the winning of their friends to Christ and the church.

The following morning I announced the plans to the convention. They were received with enthusiasm. Later I announced them to the young folks of Methodism through the *Epworth Herald,* and, with the hearty coöperation of Dr. Brummitt and the sanction of the Board of Control they were made a part of the League program.

In the "Win-My-Chum" campaign of 1915 an additional feature was added in the League Gospel Team. It proved a distinct reënforcement to the other methods employed and the last campaign was the most fruitful of all.

In these three "Win-My-Chum" campaigns, thousands of young people have been converted and brought into the churches. Dormant Christians by the thousands have been galvanized into new life, and best of all perhaps, a multitude of young people have found their hands as soul-winners and have caught Christ's passion of love for men.

The following are some of the results from individual Leagues as they have come

in to us at headquarters, in the past few weeks:

Morton Park, Chicago, forty-four conversions; Plymouth Church, Buffalo, fifty; Wesley Chapel, Indianapolis, twenty; Van Wert, O., nineteen; Bellaire, O., fifteen; Connersville, Ind., seventeen; Decorah, Ia., twenty-two; Gaither, Md., ten; Torrington, Conn., sixteen; Trinity, New Albany, Ind., fifteen; Newark, N. J., DeGroot Church, ten; Milroy, Ind., thirty-eight; Washington, N. J., over one hundred; Memphis, Mo., forty-nine; Cadillac, Mich., forty-four; Salina, Kan., thirty-six; Ravenna, O., 20; Urbana, O., twenty-five; West Madison, Ind., nine; Galva, Ill., eighteen; Mishawaka, Ind., 108; Kansas City, Kan., twenty-five; Detroit, Minn., 10; Junction City, Kan., thirty-five; Emporia, Kan., fifteen; Bellingham, Wash., twenty-three; Americus, Kan., twenty-five; Athens, Tenn., five; Berwick, Pa., eighty-one; Lewiston, Pa., fifteen; Tell City, Ind., twenty-eight; Leesburg, Ind., forty-five; Pearl Memorial, Omaha, Neb., twenty-two; Belford, N. J., one hundred and eleven. And so on and on run the reports.

Yet these are only a few out of the host of Leagues that conducted a "Win-My-Chum" campaign. And the greatest result of all has been the larger emphasis on soul-winning which this movement has introduced into the League. This enlarged appreciation does not confine its activities to the single week of the campaign, but extends over the entire year.

Following are fac-similes of some of the cards used in this campaign. The first, in the preliminary visitation of non-Christians; the second, used during the "Week" itself to "line up" professing Christians for specific forms of Christian service.

"WIN-MY-CHUM" WEEK

——Sunday
—— Monday
—— Tuesday
—Wednesday
——Thursday
—— Friday
——Sunday

To encourage the Epworth League in its "Win-My-Chum" Week, Nov.——to——, 191
at——M. E. Church,
I agree, if possible, to attend——evenings.

Signed ——

Address ——

Invited by ——

Of the following forms of Christian Activity I will engage in those I have checked below.

CHRISTIAN DECISION

- ☐ I accept Christ as a personal Saviour.
- ☐ I will unite with the Church.
- ☐ I will give up any habit which I know is hurtful.
- ☐ I will seek to live a Spirit-filled life.

CHRISTIAN DEVOTION

- ☐ I will read the Bible thoughtfully every day
- ☐ I will pray daily for myself and others.
- ☐ I will attend the League devotional meetings and the Church services of public worship weekly.
- ☐ I will pray daily for my pastor, the Church and for the evangelization of the world.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

- ☐ I will join the Epworth League.
- ☐ I will work in at least one department of League work.
- ☐ I will take at least one of the Study Courses of the League, (Missions, Bible Study, Social Service or Temperance Reform).
- ☐ I will do some definite temperance reform work this year.
- ☐ I will contribute to the Benevolences.
- ☐ I will increase my subscription to the current expenses of the Church.
- ☐ I will take the "Epworth Herald."

(Over)

	I WILL WORK IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.
	Will join a Teachers' Training class.
	Will teach if needed.
	Will work in Church nursery.
	Will contribute as much to the Sunday School as I cost it.
	I WILL DEVOTE SOME TIME EACH WEEK TO DEFINITE CHURCH WORK UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE MINISTER.
	Will call on prospective members.
	Will visit sick and shut-ins.
	Will invite young folks to League and Sunday School and to the Church services.
	Will welcome strangers at Church.
	Will interest myself in some foreign family or child.
	I WILL INTEREST MYSELF IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY, SUCH AS SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, PLAYGROUNDS, RECREATION, CLEAN POLITICS, SANITATION, ETC.
	I WILL WORK IN THE JUNIOR LEAGUE.
	Will seek to make our Junior League a real preparation class for Church membership.
	Will seek to develop in our younger boys and girls personal Christian experience by securing their attendance and participation in the Junior League.
	I WILL IF POSSIBLE GO TO COLLEGE.

Name_____

Address_____

I have spoken of the Leagues' extraordinary method of evangelism.

The second method is through the witnessing of the young people. I will discuss this in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

WITNESSING AS A WEAPON OF CONQUEST

The most original and probably most valuable contribution which a young Christian can make to the spiritual quickening of his friends is to tell them the story of God's dealings with his soul.

It is original because he takes the truths and promises of God, applies them to the needs of his own inner life, and brings them forth to his friends shot through with the rainbow colors of his own personality. The truth becomes by that process, *personalized* truth—the highest form of truth.

A book, be it ever so divine, never could save the world. But divine truth in the personal Christ can; and when we utter Christ's truth, permeated with our personality, it touches and quickens other lives as nothing else does.

It was the testimony of Thomas Bilney in the confessional to his father-confes-

sor, Hugh Latimer—a testimony of how Bilney by simple faith had found unspeakable peace in Christ—that set the scholarly priest to praying and searching the Scriptures until he too found peace in simple faith in Jesus.

It was the testimony of a Christian woman to a neighbor on the back steps of her own house, that, overheard by a strolling tinker, started the hunger-cry for God in his soul. Nor did the cry still until that tinker had become a Heaven-bound pilgrim, and his story of "Pilgrim's Progress," has blessed all Christendom.

It was the testimony of some humble Moravians on shipboard that set John Wesley on that long search for personal conscious salvation that did not cease until he felt his heart strangely warmed by the love of God shed abroad in his heart in the Aldersgate Street meeting. There Methodism began.

It was the testimony of his chum—a testimony sent by mail—that set Henry Clay Trumbull to longing and praying until

Christ came into his heart and gave the world one of its greatest modern apostles.

And we have just started the story of witnessing as a weapon of conquest.

Has it ever occurred to you that more space is given in the New Testament to one man's testimony, given again and again, than to any other event in the New Testament, excepting only the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus? Read Paul's oft-told story of the pilgrim of the Damascus Road.

It was a true historic instinct that led Bulwer-Lytton in his great novel, "The Last Days of Pompeii" to represent the conversion of Apæcides, the brilliant young Greek, as taking place through the story of the personal experience of Olinthus the Nazarene.

Those early Christians went everywhere "witnessing." And it was those fire-tipped witnessing tongues that burned their way through every existing wall of opposition until they had captured that early Roman empire for Christ.

In modern times the most effective method of evangelization has been by the word of the living witness.

Hall Caine tells of a conversation one night in London between himself and a company of Roman Catholic leaders, when the conversation chanced to fall on John Wesley. These Roman Catholics expressed the highest admiration for the statesmanship of Wesley and especially "the great man's great secret of employing the laity."

Wesley's primary method of using the laity was as witnesses. He resurrected the witnessing talent of the men and women of the congregation—a talent buried for thirteen centuries under formalism and priestcraft.

Early Methodism grew by leaps and bounds by means of a witnessing church membership.

To-day wherever the weapon is used it is equally effective. Perhaps the most striking illustration is its employment in the Gospel Team. This is an organization of from five to ten persons who conduct either

single meetings or series, making use only of song, prayer and testimony. Although gifted public speakers are occasionally found on these teams—such as Hon. Henry J. Allen, of Wichita, Kan., for instance—yet no one of them makes an address. Each one briefly tells some phase of his experience. This mode of Christian service lends itself with special readiness to young people.

The results are phenomenal. In one state alone, Kansas, there have been thousands of conversions as the result of this Gospel Team work. One Epworth League Gospel Team in Madison, Kan., won 164 to Christ last year and another League Team in Emporia, Kan., won 420; while a team in Des Moines, Ia., captured over five hundred. Hundreds of others have been won by the Gospel Teams in the League "Win-My-Chum" campaigns just ended.

But it is in the regular devotional meetings of the League that this witnessing method has largest play, and where, all the

year round its beautiful ministry is fulfilled.

So quietly does it do its work that often the older members of the church do not learn of the results except by accident. Yet in the aggregate the number of persons won to Christ by this means is very great.

It not only wins converts but makes preachers as well. On the train the other day an Indiana preacher was telling me how one little country chapter of the League at King's Creek, O., had sent out into the ministry four young men in very recent years. Some of them were won to Christ in the League meetings, and all received their first training in public speaking in the League devotional meeting.

Not long ago Dr. Frank W. Gunsaulus told me that it was the training in Christian testimony which the Methodist Church had given him when he was a young convert back in Ohio that had made a preacher of him. Thousands of preachers could say the same to-day.

Lord Beaconsfield once said: "It is a great thing to see a nation saved by its youth."

In our Civil War that was almost realized. According to figures appearing in the *Literary Digest* in 1913, there were over eight hundred thousand boys in the Union Army under seventeen at the time of enlistment. One million one hundred and fifty-one thousand enlisted at seventeen or eighteen; over two millions, in all, were under twenty-two at the time of enlistment, and less than seven hundred thousand were past that age. The nation was saved by its youth.

May history repeat itself, and our nation be saved into the higher, holier life of Christ by the youth of the churches.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEAGUE AND MISSIONS

In four outstanding ways the League promotes Missions.

First, by its Study Classes. Every year, coöperating with the Missionary Educational Movement and with our own Mission Boards the League puts a text-book in Foreign Missions and another in Home Missions in the hands of its members.

Seventeen thousand five hundred classes have been conducted since 1903, when the Department of World Evangelism was established in the League. These classes have had an enrollment of approximately 220,000.

Second, in all our thirty Institutes, lectures on Missions have a prominent place in the daily program. The daily lectures on Christian Stewardship likewise emphasize Missions.

In the three hundred annual Conventions of the League, Missions has a leading place on every program. Tens of thousands of our choicest young people thus have the

Missionary program of the church brought vividly before them. The far-reaching effect of it scarcely can be estimated.

Third, eleven hundred and two Epworthians have sailed for foreign field service in the last twelve years. At least seven hundred Epworthians have dedicated themselves to the Mission field in League Institutes and Conventions during the quadrennium just closing. On the closing day of every Institute a Life-work Decision service is the climacteric event. There, in a service of deep solemnity and often of great spiritual power, the call is made for those whom God has called, to publicly make the confession and dedication. Always there are some. Sometimes there are many.

The reaction on the much larger company who do not make a life-work pledge is exceedingly beneficial—often strikingly so. They, on their part, consecrate themselves to the support of those who go to the Mission fields, and to a more devoted service in the home church. Over and over again I have seen these services reach the deep

quiet spiritual power of the most effective evangelistic service or best type of camp meeting. In many instances young people are converted before the hour is done. At one Institute thirty-six came to the altar seeking Christ as a Saviour, after forty young people had openly dedicated themselves to the Mission fields or the Ministry.

Based on the results at the Institutes and elsewhere during the past five years are the *Epworth Herald's* figures of 1,200 League young people now preparing for the foreign field alone.

Fourth, the Leagues are giving approximately one hundred thousand dollars a year to Foreign Missions, as special gifts, besides what the individual Epworthians give through the church and Sunday School.

The general policy of the League has been to pay its benevolences through the regular church offering for Missions, and through the Sunday School, in which thousands of Epworthians are teachers. Yet the desire has been so strong to be connected vitally with concrete tasks that scores of Districts

and hundreds of chapters have undertaken the support of specific fields or workers.

The following District Leagues have been supporting in whole or in part during the quadrennium, the following Missionaries in the countries named:

Geneva, N. Y., W. C. Swearer, Korea.
Syracuse East N. Y., B. M. Jones, Burma.
Syracuse West N. Y., J. H. Blackstone, China.
State E. L. of Colorado, J. H. Garden, India.
Danville, Ill., A. W. Billing, China.
Atchison, Kansas, C. D. Morris, Korea.
Clay Center, Kansas, C. E. Parker, India.
Grand Rapids, Michigan, W. R. Clancy, India.
Grand Traverse, Michigan, C. R. Kellogg, China.
Lincoln, Nebraska, Rex R. Moe, Philippines.
Newburgh, N. Y., E. T. Iglehart, Japan.
New York, N. Y., Fred M. Pyke, China.
Fort Wayne, Indiana, D. O. Ernsberger, India.
Goshen, Indiana, C. H. Freeman, China.
Logansport, Indiana, J. F. Cottingham, Philippines.
Richmond, Indiana, G. D. Lowry, China.
Norwalk, Ohio, F. W. Heckelman, Japan.
Algona, Iowa, Corwin Taylor, Korea.
Sheldon, Iowa, G. A. Roberts, Africa.
N. New York Epworth Leagues, H. F. Rowe, China.
Aurora, Illinois, F. S. Carson, China.

Chicago Southwestern, Ill., J. C. Wengatz, Africa.
Rockford, Ill., C. J. Bernhardt and E. S. Lyons, Philippines.
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, J. T. Perkins, India.
Rock Island, Ill., E. S. Lyons, Philippines.
Detroit, Mich., Dr. and Mrs. Piper, Africa.
Cazenovia, N. Y., J. H. Baldwin, China.
Elmira, N. Y., A. D. Berry, Japan.
Bellefontaine, Ohio, I. T. Headland, North China.
Decatur, Illinois, W. E. Manley, West China.
Kalamazoo, Michigan, A. L. Becker, Korea.
West Nebraska, J. W. Hawley, West China.
New York, N. Y., Burton St. John, North China.
Goshen, Indiana, J. H. McCartney, West China.
Wooster, Ohio, E. L. Houseley, Philippines.
Ida Grove, Iowa, F. N. Scott, Japan.
Kankakee, Ill., Boys' School, Singapore.
Chicago Northwestern, Ill., C. J. Stauffacher, Africa.
Rock Island, Ill., Budaon District, India.
Elmira, N. Y., Budaon Circuit, India and A. D. Berry, Japan.
Flint, Mich., A. E. Cook, So. India, also Evangelistic Work, Peking District, China.
Buffalo, N. Y., Piratpur Ct., Bijnor Dist., India.
Olean, N. Y., Poona Dist., Bombay Conf., India.
Champaign, Ill., Elric Williams, West China, and Union University, West China.
Jacksonville, Ill., Bijnor District, India.
Ida Grove, Iowa, Peking City, Dist., China.

Manhattan, Kansas, Nagpur District, Cent. Prov., India.
Vandalia, Ill., Tirhoot District, India.
Platteville, Wisconsin, Gonda District, India.
Binghamton, N. Y., Budaon District, India.
Allegheny, Pa., District, Special Work.
Blairsville, Pa., District, Special Work.
Pittsburgh, Pa., District, Special Work.
Washington, Pa., District, Special Work.
Findlay, Ohio, District, Special Work.
Rochester, N. Y., District, Special Work.
Scranton, Pa., District, Special Work.
Maryville, Mo., District, Special Work.
Fargo, N. D., District, Special Work.
Sioux Falls, S. D., District, Special Work.
Aberdeen, S. D., District, Special Work.
Chillicothe, Ohio, District, Special Work.
Philadelphia Northwestern, District, Special Work.
Vincennes, Ind., District, Special Work.
The Dalles, Ore., District, Special Work.
Central Swedish Chicago, District, Special Work.
Muncie, Ind., District, Special Work.
Ottumwa, Iowa, District, Special Work.
Janesville, Wis., District, Special Work.
Crawfordsville, Ind., District, Special Work.
Lafayette, Ind., District, Special Work.
South Bend, Ind., District, Special Work.
Brooklyn, North, N. Y., District, Special Work.
Lancaster, Pa., District, Special Work.

Quincy, Ill., District, Special Work.
Cincinnati, O., Special Work.
Emporia, Kansas, Special Work.
Duluth, Minn., Special Work.
New Brunswick, N. J., Special Work.
Wabash, Indiana, Special Work.
Brooklyn South, N. Y., Special Work.
Milwaukee, Wis., Special Work.
Galesburg, Ill., Special Work.

This is not a complete list but gives the latest available data.

The money paid by these district Leagues ranges from two hundred to thirteen hundred dollars, each. Three thousand dollars a year is given for Epworth League work in India under the direction of Dr. B. T. Badley and his native assistant, Rev. Thomas Peters.

The Leagues of the Illinois, the Central Illinois and the Southern Illinois Conferences have undertaken the support of special work under Bishop Lewis in China.

In addition to this, individual League chapters have been supporting 254 native preachers, 348 students, forty-seven orphans, four Bible women, four married missionaries, besides special phases of work in

over two hundred foreign sections. During the year 1915 alone, in addition to the missionaries supported by upwards of eighty District League organizations 1,260 local chapters were contributing to specific objects in foreign fields. These are not complete reports but they indicate the direction of League foreign mission work.

We are well under the mark when we say that the Leagues of the country are giving a hundred thousand dollars a year to foreign missions, in addition to all they as individuals are giving to Missions through the Church and Sunday School.

No attempt has been made to secure statistics on what our Leagues are doing for Home Missions. There is a great deal being done, however. The McKeesport District of the Pittsburgh Conference, for instance, puts its district missionary offerings into work for miners, especially among foreigners. They have helped support Rev. S. W. Davis, Superintendent of the Coke Mission, aiding in maintaining the property, hiring a Bible woman, and sending out Miss

Mary Swartz as Epworth League district missionary.

The Norwegian and Swedish Epworth Leagues in America have been heavy givers to home missionary work. In several districts it has amounted to over a thousand dollars per district.

In every section of the United States kindred lines of Home Missionary service have been undertaken by the League. On the Pacific Coast work has been done for the Chinese and Japanese. In the far West and Southwest Spanish-Americans have been the special object of care; in almost all the large cities East and West, Mission work has been done for Italians, Poles, and other foreigners. As a result some of our livest-wire church workers to-day are from these foreigners. We have Italian Deaconesses, and Jewish League Presidents, and Slav League officers.

Of course we are not doing all we ought. But a substantial contribution has been made by the Epworth League to all these departments of Home Missionary service.

CHAPTER VII

THE LEAGUE IN SOCIAL SERVICE AND RECREATION

In 1913 the Board of Control broadened the Department of Mercy and Help into the Department of Social Service. The evolution was a natural one. As Epworthians relieved the wants of the poor and sick in their neighborhoods or attempted to redeem youthful offenders from evil ways, they were continually running into the *causes* of these misfortunes. This forced on their consideration community physical and social and moral conditions that could be remedied only by a broader social ministry. Hence, Social Service became a recognized department of Epworth League work.

Two text-books on Social Service have had place in the League Study Course for the past two years. "The Social Creed of the Churches," by Dr. Harry F. Ward, treats the general program of Social Service. "The Greatest Common Destroyer,"

by Rev. Harry G. McCain and Rev. E. Deets Pickett, of the Methodist Church Temperance Society, is a scientific, up-to-date discussion of the war against liquor.

These books have been taken up and studied by several hundred classes in our Leagues, and are steadily widening their circle of readers among Methodist youth. Dr. Ward, at our request, also prepared the Manual for the Social Service department in use by all League chapters.

A daily lecture on general Social Service is given at each League Institute by the best available expert. And a daily lecture on Christian Citizenship and Temperance Reform as a specialized form of Social Service is also given.

Unquestionably the interest in this subject is distinctly increasing among the Leagues everywhere.

Baltimore Epworthians maintain an Aged People's Outing Association. Every summer they send indigent old people out to the hills of the country for the renewing of vigor.

Columbus, Ohio, Epworthians conduct Fresh Air work for poor children, as do Epworthians in a number of other cities.

Hospital visitation, with ministry of flowers and reading materials, has been a valuable phase of the work of Epworth League in Chicago, Detroit and other cities.

Community surveys have been undertaken in various towns, and a beginning made in improving conditions.

Leagues have been especially active in their warfare on saloons. The Auburn Park Chapter in Chicago, organized in 1915 a Flying Squadron, composed of two speakers, a vocal quartet, a soloist and pianist, and held upwards of forty public meetings for the promotion of Temperance and Prohibition. One of their last meetings was attended by over five hundred University of Chicago students.

In the states that went "dry" in 1915 some of the most effective campaign work was done by Epworth Leagues, both in promoting publicity and in rounding up voters. At North Yakima, Washington, the

President of the Epworth League organized the greatest open-air demonstration of the campaign. It was begun as a League demonstration, but was extended to include Christian Endeavorers, Boy Scouts, the G. A. R., and the law and order forces of the city generally.

In Washington, D. C., an active propaganda has been carried on by the local League leaders to secure from Congress a National Moving Picture Censorship law.

An Indiana League procured the evidence that secured conviction in many cases of liquor selling, and gambling at the county fair, by which these evils were driven out. Leagues have furnished supplies for orphanages and deaconess homes, and aided hospitals, and befriended poor boys and girls, and taken provisions and clothing beyond computation to the needy and secured employment for "out-of-works."

And so the record goes on indefinitely. I have cited enough cases to indicate the direction of the League's activities.

APOLLO E. DUNHAM

THE LEAGUE'S RECREATION PLANS

But there is another changed aspect of League work: namely, its constructive recreation program. The attempt is being made to secure definite recreation programs under distinctly Christian auspices in every community. The Fourth Department has been changed from a Social Department with the emphasis on Socials and programs more or less literary, to the Department of Recreation and Culture, with the emphasis on a recreation program.

Someone has said: "If I may write the songs of a nation, I care not who writes its laws." I will add: "If I may make the recreations of the young life of the nation, I will willingly leave to others the writing of both its songs and its laws." For he who makes their recreations will capture the young people.

The unhappy fact is that in times past the world, the flesh and the devil have made the recreations of the great mass of young people. It is high time the Church should take a hand in it.

Our own Church has dealt with the subject by issuing a series of prohibitions. That is well, but nature abhors a vacuum—young human nature most of all. We ought to provide a substitute for harmful amusements. Negations alone will not suffice. We must have a positive, constructive program. This the Epworth League is providing.

The Department of Recreation has this as its mission in every local League chapter. If heartily carried out, this alone will justify the existence of the League.

I suggested some recreation plans for boys in their teens, at one of the Ohio Conferences two years ago. This year a pastor said to me: "We tried out those plans with the boys of 'teen age in my parish with the happiest results. Received a fine company of them into the church, and yesterday, as I was about to start for Conference, I was handed a purse of fifty dollars, with these words: 'This is from a group of business men whose boys you have helped. We are not members of the church,

but we want you to know that we deeply appreciate what you have done for our lads.'" Similar testimony has come from other parts of the country.

The son of a saloon-keeper was converted and became a Methodist preacher in Iowa. (Afterwards that son led his father to Christ). This young preacher leased the opera house in the town where he was pastor, and by the aid of his League, put on a series of entertainments that packed it to the doors—the most popular series ever given in the town. That young preacher I invited to write the Manual for the Fourth Department of the Epworth League. It is brim full of fine plans and practical suggestions for every-day conditions of every-day young folks. Rev. Peter Jacobs is the young preacher.

In our Epworth League Institutes, daily lectures on Recreation Programs, both for rural and town Churches, are given by men who have done the work. And every evening from seven to eight a Social Clinic is held. That is, an actual demonstration of

the methods in Recreation by men and women who are experts.

This recreation program is of a sort that can be reproduced by almost any League in its home Church. Yet always the wider constituency, the young people of the community, must be the larger objective. These recreational programs, are indeed, of superlative value in providing wholesome enjoyment for the youth of the church, but they should be a ministry also: a ministry of good cheer and persuasive fellowship to the young life of the neighborhood. The invisible net of a League's cordiality and infectious comradeship may draw scores within the grip of the League's spiritual message.

I am convinced that the hold of the average country church on the young life of the community could be increased a hundredfold by a carefully wrought-out program of recreation. The same is measurably true of the towns; but in these, more recreation provision is accessible through the schools. However, even where this is

the case there remains a large—in many instances a preponderating—number of young people who are outside school circles and whose recreational needs should be supplied.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LEAGUE'S "WEST POINTS"— THE INSTITUTES

One of the very most valuable pieces of work ever performed for the young life of the church was the organization by Dr. Edwin M. Randall, General Secretary Epworth League 1904-12, of the Epworth League Institute.

Its plan is three-fold: Instruction, recreation, inspiration.

The Institutes begin on a Monday night and close the following Sunday night. The standard daily program is about as follows:

6:30 A. M.—Morning Watch service with keynote for the day.

8 A. M. to 12:30—Lectures to classes in Bible Study, Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Social Service, Christian Stewardship, Christian Citizenship, Rural problems, Recreation plans, Personal Evangelism, Junior League work, Adolescent boy and girl problems and Senior League methods,

with occasionally lectures on Church History.

This means from two to four classes each hour.

The afternoons are given over to recreation, usually under direction of a member of the Institute faculty.

From 6:45 to 7:45 P. M. a demonstration of recreation methods by groups of Epworthians.

At 8:00 P. M. an inspirational address.

On Sunday:

Morning Watch at 7 A. M.

Love-Feast at 9:00 A. M.

Preaching at 10:30.

Life work decision service, 3.00 P. M.

6:30 P. M., Model League Devotional Meeting.

8:00 P. M., Preaching and closing consecration service. Sometimes this takes the form of a Sacramental Service.

The faculty consists of from seven to twelve persons, according to the financial ability of the Institute. They are chosen as experts in their several departments. The

service of these members of the faculty is rendered without charge: only their expenses being paid by the Institute.

The students composing the Institutes represent a high average of League life. In some Institutes League officers make up a large majority of the delegates. They pay their own way as a rule. In some sections the chapter pays the whole or a part of the expenses of its delegates. The registration fee of each student or delegate is usually $2.00. Some Institutes fix a lower fee and one or two charge $2.50. These fees go to pay the publicity and other expenses of the Institute, including the expenses of the faculty.

The Institutes range in size from one hundred to four hundred. Two hundred is the average; though quite a number run over three hundred.

In 1912 there were twelve Institutes, counting Independent (locally managed) as well as Central Office Institutes. Last year (1915) there were twenty-nine. Thirty-

four are being planned for the summer of 1916.

All are held in the summer—the vacation period. Many conventions are held at various seasons of the year, some of which offer certain Institute features; but these are not included in the above summary.

The General Secretary has immediate charge of all Central Office Institutes and general oversight of all. The line between Central Office and so-called Independent Institutes is less sharply drawn than formerly.

At the Institutes of 1915 over four hundred young people dedicated themselves to the ministry, or the foreign or home mission field, as a life work. Many of these, as in preceding Institutes, will have to prepare themselves first. This means college and perhaps post-graduate studies.

I conducted a series of meetings at DePauw University recently. President Grose told me that seven students had entered in the fall as a result of the Battle Ground Institute in July preceding.

But a considerable number of these Institute volunteers are already prepared, as far as college training is concerned. Some of the strongest of recent accessions to our annual conferences and mission fields are Institute volunteers of this quadrennium.

It is the reflex influence of the Institutes on the local church, however, which is greatest.

"My church," said a Kansas City pastor, recently, "could have afforded to go to the bank and borrow the money to send our group of Leaguers to the Institute simply for the financial returns, for every one of them came back a tither."

"I sent seventeen young folks to the Lake Geneva Institute," said a Chicago pastor to me, "and every one of them came back a tither."

"Two young women from my church who went to the Institute two years ago and got a new vision, have transformed the young life of the church," said a Western pastor last spring. "We have never had two such years in this church." The Bishop

has made this young pastor a district superintendent. The Bishop wants that type of work extended.

All in all the League Institutes are doing a phenomenal work. The young people's Institutes under the auspices of the various Boards of Missions are doing a notable work, as they have done for many years. But there are only six of them, while there are thirty-four conducted by the Epworth League.

In the wholesomeness of the recreations; in the cleanness and joy of their fellowship; in the scientific thoroughness of their instruction, and in the tremendous spiritual grip of their devotion, they constitute an ideal training camp for the church of tomorrow.

CHAPTER IX

THE EPWORTH LEAGUE A PROCESSION

The colleges of our church in America four years ago had forty-seven thousand students, white and black. This included secondary schools. During the quadrennium tens of thousands of new students have entered, but the total is practically the same —about forty-eight thousand.

The college deals with a procession. Every year it graduates its thousands into the larger activities of life. Other thousands drop out only partly prepared for those larger activities.

It is exactly so with the Epworth League. The League's course is a little longer. Yet no longer either, if the preparatory school and professional or business course be included. The average "course" of membership in the League is about nine years, and properly so. The League receives its members usually at seventeen or eighteen, and graduates them into the larger activities of

the church when they are anywhere between twenty-five and thirty years of age. Some take a "post-graduate" course, but this does not change the general order.

During the past four years about three hundred and eighty thousand young people have joined the League. But during the same period one hundred and forty thousand have been graduated into the larger church activities: the official board or offices and teacherships in the Sunday School. Thirty-five thousand a year.

There has been a net gain of forty thousand members. But the gain is one hundred and forty thousand less than it otherwise would be, were it not for this continuous graduation process.

In this respect the League and the college differ radically from the Sunday School. The Sunday School takes all ages from the cradle to old age. When the babies come we put them on the Cradle Roll of the Sunday School, and if we are entirely successful their names never come off the Sunday School Roll until they die.

The Sunday School is the most inclusive religious organization in the land: more inclusive far than the church itself, for it includes the families of church members and the families of their friends, and of all those in the community who are at all disposed toward a religious life. It is the great Half-Way-House to the church. We rejoice in this. It is our great evangelistic opportunity and field.

The Epworth League on the other hand, is an elected band or army of workers, of defined age, in training for the advanced work of the Kingdom.

In addition to the loss by graduation, a loss of twenty-five thousand has been occasioned by Epworthians going away to college. This does not mean that they are lost to the church or to the Christian life. In the college their Christian work is done through the Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A., interdenominational organizations. The great majority of one-time Epworthians do not again become members of the League after graduation from college. Those of

them who remain active Christians go into the maturer lines of Christian work in the church. Ten thousand more Epworthians go off to college but remain members of the League, either in the home League, or by transferring their membership to the League in the church in the college town.

Fully sixty thousand Epworth League members have been lost to the church during the quadrennium by removal from the home town "without letter." Some of them are a part of that large Methodist army lost every year by removal without letter. Young people change residence oftener than older people and the proportion of loss is doubtless larger among Epworthians.

Twenty-four thousand Epworthians have died during the quadrennium.

Three thousand Epworthians have entered the ministry or gone into the foreign mission fields or into other specialized forms of Christian service—such as Y. M. C. A. or Y. W. C. A. secretaryships.

As many more have become preachers' wives or deaconesses. These still remain

on our chapter rolls, usually, our very best recruiting officers and drill sergeants.

Approximately, ninety thousand Epworthians have been dropped from the chapter rolls during the quadrennium by the local Leagues for non-payment of dues, or other neglect of League duties.

The Epworth League is the only organization in the church making a per capita tax. This is for the support of the national work of the League as well as its local activities. While the amount is small yet it is sufficient to cause most chapters to prune records carefully when it comes time to pay dues.

Other Epworthians backslide and drop out of both League and church. Others are careless and neglect attendance on the devotional meetings of the League. Because of such indifference and failure to pay the per capita tax, they are stricken from the rolls by watchful cabinets.

Often a little care and tact on the part of League officers would save these careless ones. If they were assigned some definite

task—for "to particularize is to vitalize"—they would be held to the League and church.

What would happen to the church records of Methodism if official boards were as drastic in trimming membership rolls as are Epworth League cabinets? Instead of 4,300,000 members, we should have less than 3,000,000. For it is a rare thing for over sixty per cent of the membership of a local church to pay to its support and attend regularly its means of grace.

The healthy growth of the League as a whole is seen in the fact that the quadrennium just closing, 1912-16, has seen the largest number of charters issued of any charters. No preceding quadrennium, save the one in which the League began, has reached three thousand charters. And it is seen in the further fact that after all graduations, removals and eliminations a net gain of over forty thousand members is registered.

CHAPTER X

THE LEAGUE-KILLING PREACHER

There are not many of him; far more often the preacher is the League's big brother, its guide, defender and inspiration. In numberless cases he is the Man behind the Movement. The young people know it and talk lovingly of "our preacher." But there are three or four preachers who are different.

There is the step-mother preacher. He takes great interest in his own spiritual children but is very impatient with other preachers' converts—especially his predecessor's. They are apt to be "frivolous," "indifferent," "intractable" and the like, and the step-mother preacher proceeds to show his opinion of them in so many unmistakable ways that they leave home, and their organization, the League, languishes or dies.

Then there is the get-rich-quick preacher. This brother must have showy results and have them quickly. He has his eye on

finances. He will call twenty times on a rich man or woman to get him or her into the church. But he has not time to call on a poor boy or girl to instruct them in the methods of Christian efficiency.

Often the pressure comes from his lay officials. A pastor in a Connecticut church received a group of boys and girls into the church. A lay official said to him: "There's not ten cents a week in the whole bunch."

Seven years later that minister was again appointed pastor of that church. He found that "bunch" of young people paying one-ninth of the entire budget of that vigorous city church.

I asked Bishop E. H. Hughes not long ago: "If you were a pastor again in what way would you change your emphasis?" He replied, "I would give myself to the boys and girls." "Unless I could find someone who could do it better than myself, I would train them myself."

But the get-rich-quick preacher is impatient of slowly ripening processes. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn

in the ear" is not a favorite passage with him. The complex training program of the Epworth League is too slow for him. Besides it requires a lot of pastoral oversight and pains.

So he gives himself to working up "Big" occasions—display crowds, display programs, and dress parade results. In this he is aided by that type of lay official already referred to, who would rather hear the click of a camp-chair in the aisle than the sob of a new-born soul.

This type of pastor moves on, and the dress parade crowd dissolves. A new preacher begins at the foundation to build for the Kingdom, and if he is a preacher who will give himself painstakingly to the youth of the church, when he leaves, he will leave behind a living temple.

After the San Francisco earthquake a gentleman was walking down street with a citizen, when suddenly the latter gripped his arm: "Do you see that man yonder?" "Yes." "He is a prominent contractor, and *his buildings stood!*"

The third League-killing preacher is of an entirely different type, and deserves more sympathetic treatment. With him it is a constitutional defect. He is a speculative thinker. He is interested in adolescence, but not in boys and girls. With him religion is a series of problems to be solved by a series of propositions. His own temptations have been in the realm of doubt, and his conversion was a "passing out of intellectual diversity into intellectual unity."

Hence the League, intensely practical and intensely devotional, is a terra incognita to him. He tolerates it with a scholar's toleration for all things human. Its activities are without significance; he "sees men as trees walking." Or, if he chances to sense the philosophy of the League movement he is temperamentally unfitted to show his sympathy to his young people and to articulate his methods of work with theirs. Hence his League slowly dies.

The fourth League-killing preacher is the victim of environment, and not infrequently that environment is about the table of his

own home. Or if not his home table, the tables of leading officials of his church.

When this preacher was younger and his children were small, he threw himself with all his soul into the all-around work of the church. He had a flourishing Sunday School, a big, cheery prayer meeting, gracious revivals, a vigorous, happy Epworth League, young people by the score in his audiences, from whom the ranks of the ministry and mission field were joyously recruited.

Now this preacher is in a rich church. His success has brought him promotion after promotion. His children are in the 'teens or twenties. Their associations are with the children of the wealthy. Christianity in earnest is not popular. To speak of one's inner spiritual life is not good form, and the display of emotion is a sign of ignorance.

"What, may I ask, is your religion?" asked a minister of a society leader. "The religion of a gentleman," was the stiff reply. "And what, sir, is the religion of a

gentleman?" "That, sir, is something no gentleman ever tells."

It takes an exceedingly warm and vital spiritual life in the home of a minister or layman in this "society" type of church, to hold the children of the family to anything more than the most formal religious life.

This preacher's children say: "Why, papa, the young folks of our leading families do not attend the League." And often, in this type of church, that is true. What the young people of "the leading families" are doing of Sunday evenings does not augur well for the future of the church or for the leading families.

And so our preacher is perplexed. He longs in his heart for the good times of earlier pastorates. But gradually the atmosphere does its work. He reaches the conclusion that the human heart has changed; that religion is not the same as it used to be. And he rises in some preachers' meeting and asserts that "a new type of organization is needed for the young people of the

church; something that will draw the young people of our best families."

And the crowd that really does "draw" the young people of these "best families" —at the Sunday automobile picnics and at the after-theater midnight suppers with cabaret attachments, hear of it and laugh.

CHAPTER XI

WHY THE JUNIOR LEAGUE?

The injunction of Paul to a young pastor, "Keep that which is committed to thy care," is the only apology needed for the existence of the Junior League.

Boys and girls from ten to sixteen years of age have just as definitely been committed to the care of the Church as those younger or older.

We say with pride that eighty-five per cent of our church membership comes through the Sunday School. Thank God for them! But what of the larger number who pass through the Sunday School out into the world indifferent to the Church and to the claims of Christ?

Real initiation into the Christian life requires self-expression. It is a good thing to teach a truth. It is even more to get the one taught to express it, and to get him to express it in relation to his own inner life. Expression maintains impression and deep-

ens it. To teach a truth is to drive a nail through a board. To get the one taught to utter it in relation to his own inner life is to clinch the nail on the other side.

This is one reason why we need the Junior League—an organization where boys and girls achieve Christian standing and strength by definite and repeated confession of their faith and where they learn Christ's program by doing it.

The early adolescent period is the time when boys and girls begin to covet responsibility and leadership. They are awaking to the sense of self-direction. The organizing faculty stirs within them. It is the age when every boy and girl "wants to belong"—yes, when they *must* belong. And without shouldering the responsibilities that come with "belonging" they are not likely to develop capacity for service and leadership.

It is not possible to measure the value of the Sunday School's beautiful and puissant ministry. But it is a service done for youth rather than by youth. The responsibility

is on the adult teachers and officers. In the Junior League the officers, committees and members are all alike boys and girls, with the single exception of the Superintendent.

In political science, organizations like the Junior Republic are demonstrating the soundness of the same pedagogical principle.

In this, of course, is the peril of the Junior League: the danger that the boy and girl membership, in the exercise of their buoyant and spontaneous individual initiative, will run away with the organization. But this is a peril only where there is an inefficient superintendent. With a competent superintendent these ebullient energies of adolescence are readily directed into channels of personal Christian enrichment and growth and harnessed into service for others.

This energy will break out. It is the age for doing things. It may be made the age of real achievement—simply by the taking of a little care and pains by the Church. The setting before these boys and girls a clearly

defined and appropriate program, and then sympathetically leading them to the doing of it—that is the goal. Of course you could find older persons who could do better the work you put before the boys and girls. Or you could do it far better yourself. But you would miss making the boys and girls! And that is the greater achievement.

I say this energy will break out. It may be systematized service with a great end in view. Or it may be organized vandalism. Chicago is being overrun to-day by boy bandits. Some of them are so young that the term "baby bandits" has come into newspaper headlines to describe them. Boys fifteen, sixteen or seventeen wielding knives and pistols!

Wouldn't it pay the Church to spend a little more time with the boys and girls?

As far as boys in general are concerned the Boy Scout movement has made the strongest appeal to them of any semi-religious, restraining agency. Every healthy boy loves the tang of the woods and water.

But the Boy Scout program could hardly be said to prepare boys for church membership, or to develop either local or general church loyalty. It has many admirable features for developing healthy, clean-minded boys. And if it can be kept in the hands of Christian men it will render permanently valuable service. Its general management is entirely independent of the churches. The movement asks the churches for their boys but does not permit the churches to have any part in the general supervision of those boys as Boy Scouts. That is in the hands of a group of gentlemen acknowledging responsibility neither to any Church nor to all Churches combined. In this it differs from the Sunday School movement, the Y. M. C. A. and all other Christian movements. And in this there is peril, though it may not be immediate peril.

The point in this connection is that however heartily we may welcome Boy Scout features as an open door to wholesome recreation and to the cultivation of certain

manly virtues, we can hardly make it a substitute for a distinctly Christian training of our boys.

The business of a Junior League superintendent is to see that every boy and girl in the League is a Christian, and that if possible before he is thirteen.

Second only to this is the duty of training those boys and girls for intelligent, active church membership.

The Junior League course of study is framed with infinite care to accomplish just this. It acquaints them with the history of the Church; with its great enterprises; with its government and methods; with its local program, and in simple yet effective fashion with the great doctrines of Christianity as interpreted by Methodism, that these boys and girls may be able to give a reason for "the hope that is in them."

It goes without saying that wherever there is a well-cared-for Junior League there is soon an efficient Epworth League. It is surprising how quickly the Juniors grow up. I have known many great Ep-

worth Leagues. But I have known but few that equalled and none that surpassed in achievement for the last ten years a League in Missouri that has made its influence felt in every part of a city of forty thousand people in charitable and mission work and Sunday School activities and in creating wholesome recreational plans. It has been responsible for building a successful League Institute for the Epworthians of half a great commonwealth. It has more than any other force contributed to building a great church and Sunday School. The long-time president of that League is now Superintendent of the Sunday School, and perhaps the foremost Sunday School leader in the city. And that League of over three hundred members grew out of a Junior League started by a group of boys in a barn, under the inspiration of a faithful pastor's wife who has since gone to join the Choir Invisible.

Thirteen hundred charters, exactly, were issued to Junior Leagues in the quadrennium 1912-16. May the time not be dis-

tant when in every church of Methodism, alongside of a vigorous and jubilant Sunday School, supplementing and carrying further its work by intensive methods, there may stand an efficient and radiant Junior League. Happy is the Conference that hath its quiver full of them!

CHAPTER XII

SHALL WE REVERT TO STATE-CHURCH FORMALISM?

Not long since I was talking with a prominent Sunday School official on the power of personal testimony to rivet interest and to produce conviction. "Yes," responded this eminent leader, "but what are you going to do when they haven't anything to tell?"

This leader recognized one of the great weaknesses of the church of to-day—namely, that multitudes come into membership without either conversion or any equivalent for conversion.

They inherit their parents' pew in the church and with it their faith, in the sense of a formal assent to the church's teaching. Or they come into membership in a group under the influence of a group movement, with the same formal and perfunctory assent to the church's teachings.

Professor Harnack, of Berlin, describes the type when he says: "When the second and third generations after the founding of a new religion have passed away, when thousands have become its adherents—no longer through conversion but by the influences of tradition and birth; when those who have laid hold upon the faith as great spoil are joined by crowds of others who wrap it round them like an outer garment, a revolution always occurs. The religion of strong feeling and of the heart passes into the religion of custom, and therefore of form."

There are some Methodist churches today of this type, largely the development of the last quarter century.

The Epworth League does not flourish in this type of church. Often it is impossible for it even to live in this atmosphere. For the League was born of an impulse of religious earnestness. And while it is constructed on broad lines—social service and recreational life being a part of its program, as well as missions and Bible Study and

devotional meetings—yet its organization is built around ideals that demand moral thoughtfulness and some degree of religious earnestness. It is too heavy a demand to make of young people whose highest conception of religion is occasional attendance on a dignified and somewhat formal Sunday morning preaching service, or participation now and then in the social fellowship and lesson regime of the Sunday School. The rest of the Sabbath is to be spent in recreation—auto riding, tennis, social visiting, informal dancing, or attendance at moving picture shows.

I repeat that it is this type of young church members that the League does not appeal to. To them it is "dull," "stupid," etc.

This is a much less serious situation for the Epworth League at large than for the churches described. The League will flourish in thousands of churches of a more Methodistic, not to say Christian, type—for

such churches and such young Christians we have a multitude of, thank God.

But it is a serious matter for the future of the churches referred to. And it is a serious matter when the pastors of those churches or their district superintendents come into the councils of the church and ask for some form of organization for young people of more "modern" type. In other words they come asking us to bring down the ideals and methods of the organized young life of the whole church to the level of their own dilettante and worldly members.

Methodism began as a struggle by earnest young men to find a way out of the formalism and living death of a State Church. It was a church that employed catechetical methods with its youth, and catechetical methods only. When they had been taught something of the Bible, the creed, the catechism and how to handle a prayer-book, they were ready for confirmation. They then came into full membership in the church.

The same general method was pursued by the Lutherans and other state churches of Europe. Religion had but little power over the moral or political or industrial life of the people. High society and low festered and rotted at the heart.

Then came the French Revolution, and England would have plunged into the same vortex but for one thing—the fact that that group of young men already referred to had found their way out of the deadly formalism into a religion of gladness and peace, and had carried it to so many of their English countrymen that they were saved from the cataclysm of the bloody revolution.

To-day Europe is in a death-grapple, the outburst of passions which a religion of ritualism and formalism could not tame. The war is not proof of the failure of Christianity, but it is a proof of the failure of Christianity of the type which has dominated Europe for many generations. Aesthetic ritualism and formal intellectualism are but ribbons of cloud and ropes of sand in dealing with the stronger passions of man-

kind. There must be a religion that grips the heart—the deepest nature of man.

The tendency of all organized religion is to crystallize into purely intellectual formulas, and to make the teaching of these formulas, on the one hand, and the reception of them on the other, the sum and substance of religion. It was so among the ancient Jews, and it has been so among all Christian churches.

If this is true of the church itself, with all its aids to devotion, will it not be still more inevitable with those forms of religious organizations which by their very genius have instruction as their primary object, and which by their names and the titles of their leaders are pledged to make instruction their dominating function?

An organization that thus by its genius and primary function is a school cannot naturally or successfully take over the functions of a society organized around the impulse of worship, devotional self-expression and service.

The State Churches of Europe have made the fatal blunder of training their youth after these exclusively pedagogical ideals. We of America should profit by their mistake.

Hence the young people of Methodism ought not be left to a purely catechetical and academic type of training. And a religion that does not find expression in speech and loving service for others, is academic. What there is of it will die unless there be such expression, and we shall see our Methodism drifting back into the inertia and gloom out of which originally she emerged.

But I am persuaded better things of thee, O Methodism, though I thus speak.

The dominant type with us is not the ritualistic type; nor the catechetical nor academic. Speaking broadly, the heart of the church beats true to the experiential type, which is essential, apostolic Christianity. With a renaissance of this type of Christianity in the hearts of the youth of Methodism we can take the world before the close of the century.

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